

- *Policy GND (Legal) Relations with Educational Entities:* Texas Education Agency defines the academic excellence indicators, which include TAAS accountability measures in addition to the results of the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), the American College Test (ACT), and the percentage of students taking the end-of-course assessments at the high school level.

Overall, the scope of the assessment program in the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District was determined to be inadequate to provide data for effective decision making.

The following is a list of the tests administered in the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District, the grades in which each is administered, and a description of each assessment:

- **TAAS:** The Texas Assessment of Academic Skills is a criterion-referenced program, administered to students in grades 3 through 8 and 10 in reading and mathematics and in writing in grades 4, 8, and 10. Eighth grade students also take science and social studies tests in addition to mathematics and reading.
- **End-of-Course Tests:** These tests are required by the State of Texas at the completion of English II, biology, Algebra I, and U.S. History. These criterion-referenced tests address the content of these specific courses as well as content from previous grades.
- **TPRI:** The Texas Primary Reading Inventory is an early reading instrument administered in kindergarten through grade 2. It is used to identify developmental progress with the reading process.
- **RPTE:** The Reading Proficiency Test in English is administered to all bilingual students and is used to assess English proficiency.
- **PSAT:** The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test is an assessment given to high school students who register for the test. Students are encouraged to take this test that measures verbal and mathematical reasoning.
- **SAT:** The Scholastic Aptitude Test is designed to measure verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities. Eleventh and 12th grade students planning to attend college are encouraged to take this test. Students must register and pay for this test themselves.
- **ACT:** The American College Test is designed to measure verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities. Students planning to attend college are encouraged to take this test during the last half of their high school years. Students must register and pay for this test themselves.

To determine scope of the student assessment program, the auditors examined all test data presented to them as the totality of system-wide assessments used in the district. This information was catalogued by the subject offered at each grade level to determine which subject areas offered were actually formally assessed. The information on subject areas and grade levels tested was entered into Exhibit 4.2.1. According to audit standards, an adequate student assessment program must assess at least 70 percent of the subject areas offered.

Exhibit 4.2.1 presents the scope of formal testing administered by curriculum areas within the district.

Exhibit 4.2.1 Scope of Formal Assessments Administered in Grades K-12 Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 2000-2001															
Content Areas	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	No. Grades Tested	% Tested
Language Arts	X D	X D	X D	X D	X D	X D	X D	X D	X D	-- D	X E D	-- C D	-- C	13	100
Mathematics	--	--	--	X	X	X	X	X	X	E	X	-- C	-- C	10	77
Science	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	X	--	E	--	--	2	15

Exhibit 4.2.1 (continued) Scope of Formal Assessments Administered in Grades K-12 Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 2000-2001															
Content Areas	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	No. Grades Tested	% Tested
Social Studies	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	X	--	E	--	--	2	15
Health	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	N	N	N	0	0
Physical Education	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	N	N	0	0
Journalism	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	--	--	--	0	0
Communication/ Debate	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	--	--	--	0	0
Reading Appl./ Study Skills	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	N	N	N	0	0
Theater Arts	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	N	--	--	--	--	0	0
Career and Tech.	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
Bilingual/ESL	--	--	--	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10	77
Foreign Lang.	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	--	--	--	0	0
Music	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
Art	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	N	N	N	0	0
Computer Literacy/ Science	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	N	N	--	N	N	N	0	0
Conflict Resolution	N	N	N	N	--	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	0
Attitudes	N	N	--	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0	0
Project Alert	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	N	N	N	N	0	0
Character Ed.	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	N	N	N	N	N	0	0
VEH Shop	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	N	N	N	N	N	0	0
ROTC	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	--	--	--	0	0
Student Leadership	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	N	N	0	0
Acad. Decathlon	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	0	0
Adaptive Living	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	--	--	--	0	0
PASS	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	--	N	N	N	0	0
Curriculum Areas Tested	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	5	3	5	3	3	37 of 150	
Percentage of Curriculum Areas Tested	11	11	10	38	33	38	33	27	50	17	36	25	23		
Possible Number of Tested Areas – 119															
Key: X = State-mandated test administered; C = Tests administered for college entrance; D = Locally designed test administered by the district; N = Course/subject not taught at this grade; E = End-of-Course examination; -- = No assessment given															

As can be noted in Exhibit 4.2.1:

- Of the 150 grades/courses where formal testing could have occurred, testing took place in 37 areas. The 37 areas, however, included the RPTE testing that is administered to bilingual students and the college entrance testing, neither of which is administered to a majority of the students in any one grade level.
- The scope of the formal testing is 25 percent, which is considerably less than the 70 percent required for adequate scope.
- The area tested most often was language arts.
- State-mandated testing comprises the vast majority of the testing done.
- The district has designed language arts assessments administered each year in kindergarten through the 11th grade.

- Some curricular areas, such as health, physical education, career and technology courses, foreign language, music, art, and technology, are not assessed in any way.
- The SAT and the ACT are administered and counted, but only a small number of high school students register and take these tests.

Use of Data

Not only is it important to have a wide variety of types of feedback data, but having those data also requires its use to improve results.

Auditors examined reports made to the board and to the community, intra-district communications, and program information to conceptualize the amount of data usage and the purposes for which the data were used within the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District. Interviews were also conducted with campus and central office administrators, classroom teachers and board members to determine the extent to which the district formally uses its data for decision making related to student achievement.

Overall, not only is the scope of the assessment program within Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District limited largely to state criterion-referenced tests, but auditors also found limited use of it in the process of designing systems to impact learning, especially the learning of those students who are achieving less well than other students because of economic factors.

Direction for linking feedback to the design and delivery of curriculum has its origin in policy. For example:

- *Board Policy BQ (Legal) Planning and Decision Making* requires a comprehensive needs assessment addressing student performance on the academic excellence indicators and other appropriate measures of performance, that are disaggregated by all student groups. This policy goes on to require the district to evaluate its policies, procedures, and staff development activities at least every two years to ensure that they positively impact student performance.
- *Board Policy EKB (Legal) Testing Programs: State Assessment Program* requires the reporting of student performance data to the public. It also requires the superintendent to report all assessment test results, with appropriate interpretations, to the board.

State law requires districts to provide detailed reports of student achievement to the board, parents, and community. The data from state-mandated assessments include specific feedback about every student and are made available to each district by the state. In addition, the district has implemented its own assessment of reading beginning at the kindergarten level.

Auditors were given the Academic Excellence Indicator System handouts that had been presented to the board for the last five years. This is an annual report and includes test results for all state criterion-referenced tests as well as SAT and ACT results. In addition, financial and staff data are also part of this presentation. Data were disaggregated by all student groups as well.

All campus improvement plans contained data to be used as needs assessments (see Finding 1.2). In addition, during on-site visits, auditors were given data notebooks as examples of the use of data. Example notebooks from schools included various program narratives such as the gifted and talented program narrative found in the Flores Elementary data notebook and the Reading Recovery program narrative found in the Robb Elementary notebook. Following various program descriptions were data sheets for each teacher's classroom. For example, a class roster for a teacher included the names of all of the students, report card grades for reading and mathematics, STAR reading testing information, TAAS data if available, and bilingual testing if applicable. Interviews were conducted to determine the extent to which data were used to change classroom practices and to make modifications to programs designed to address particular needs. However, no information was provided regarding how these student profiles were used to make changes in the instructional program during the school year.

Several persons interviewed provided their views of how data are used by school staff. Example remarks included the following:

- "Benchmark tests are used to identify what we need more help on."
- "I break it (TAAS results) down, take a look at each objective, and identify what we did that was good and how we could make it better."
- "We looked at the data to learn how the students were answering the questions, and how we were missing the boat in the curriculum in some places."

However, others responded that data are not systematically used. Representative comments included the following:

- "There isn't a strong reliance on data. Decisions aren't data-driven the way they should be."
- "Making the connections between the assessments is where we are falling down."
- "Item analysis is being used through 6th grade in about 70 percent of the campuses. Secondary is not using [it] to this level."
- "We need some measure of accountability. We need surveys that are sent directly to the superintendent."

Although data are available and some of the campuses state that they are using data, when auditors requested examples of how students are served differently as a result of data, no examples could be given. No detail about what was included or excluded in the curriculum could be given. Likewise, no services could be identified that were provided as a result of information regarding specific student needs. Finally, the most specific answer to the question was the following: "Facilitators and principals use the data to determine placement, summer school, retention if needed...more programmatically than instructionally."

In summary, the scope of formal assessments in the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District is inadequate to provide data to teachers and administrators for the purpose of making good decisions. Twenty-five percent (25 percent) of the taught curriculum is assessed, which is far less than the 70 percent required for adequacy. Additionally, use of the data that are available is limited to placement and retention rather than modifying the delivery of the curriculum to enhance the learning of individual students during the learning process.

Finding 4.3: District Student Achievement Trend Data Demonstrate Improved Performance Overall; However, Gaps in Achievement Among Student Groups Remain.

Comprehensive student assessment data enable the board, the educational community, parents, and students to assess how well the school system is doing in educating its students in comparison with the nation, state, or other school districts, and, most importantly, in comparison with itself over time. Effective school districts use comparative data from a variety of student assessment instruments to establish instructional goals and to target performance gap reductions among the various student groups within the district.

Auditors expect to see improvement over time in student performance on various student assessment instruments and a reduction of any performance gaps that might exist among various student groups. Another expectation is that, over time, the achievement of students would be better than the predicted level of achievement based on student demographics such as socio-economic data.

The audit team reviewed test data and annual Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports to determine the extent to which achievement differences occur among campuses, grade levels, and demographic groups. Data for the following assessments were analyzed:

- Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) for reading in grades 3 through 8 and 10; mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and 10; and writing for grades 4, 8, and 10;
- TAAS for science and social studies administered in grade 8;
- TAAS End-of-Course exams for Algebra I, Biology I, U.S. History, and English II;

- Advanced Placement Exams; and
- SAT and ACT exams.

Auditors presented exhibits of TAAS data for grades 4, 8, and 10 primarily because more content areas were tested in these grades than in other grades.

Exhibit 4.3.1, Exhibit 4.3.2, and Exhibit 4.3.3 display the 4th grade TAAS results for the reading, mathematics, and writing sub-tests for the district as well as for the sub-groups tested from 1997 through the 2001 administration. It should be noted that the results for the 2001 test administration were preliminary results released by the Texas Education Agency. Slight variations may be recorded when the final results are published in August 2001. No data are provided for African American students even though this is a student group for which data are reported because the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District did not have sufficient numbers of African American students tested in any grade level for the data to be reported. A minimum of 30 students in any student group is required for the data to be disaggregated by that student group at the campus and/or district level.

Exhibit 4.3.1 TAAS Reading Scores for Grade 4 Disaggregated by Student Groups Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1997-2001				
Year	District	Hispanics	Anglos	Economically Disadvantaged
1997	73.7	71.6	82.0	70.4
1998	89.2	86.5	98.2	85.6
1999	86.8	86.2	90.9	83.7
2000	80.2	77.3	96.1	77.4
2001	82.0	80.0	94.0	79.0
Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card				

Exhibit 4.3.2 TAAS Mathematics Scores for Grade 4 Disaggregated by Student Groups Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1997-2001				
Year	District	Hispanics	Anglos	Economically Disadvantaged
1997	76.2	72.5	92.0	73.3
1998	88.1	85.2	98.1	85.1
1999	87.6	86.7	93.9	75.0
2000	78.8	76.1	92.5	84.4
2001	86.0	85.0	92.0	85.0
Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card				

Exhibit 4.3.3 TAAS Writing Scores for Grade 4 Disaggregated by Student Groups Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1997-2001				
Year	District	Hispanics	Anglos	Economically Disadvantaged
1997	82.8	80.4	93.8	79.7
1998	89.2	86.5	98.2	85.6
1999	87.7	86.6	96.3	85.6
2000	84.5	82.4	96.0	81.8
2001	87.0	86.0	88.0	84.0
<i>Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card</i>				

As can be noted from the exhibits above:

- District average scores have remained in the 80 to 90 percent range with students scoring best overall in writing.
- District average scores have risen and fallen inconsistently over the five-year span. For example, District reading scores sat at 73 percent passing in 1997, increased to 89 percent in 1998, and then began falling again for the next two test administrations before the scores increased slightly in 2001.
- Hispanic students' scores have improved in reading by 9 points over the five-year period; scores for Anglo students have increased by 12 points; and, economically disadvantaged students' scores have increased by nine percentage points.
- Scores in mathematics have increased for Hispanic students from 1997 to 2001 by 15 percentage points, remained constant for Anglo students, and increased by 12 percentage points for economically disadvantaged students over the same time frame.
- Scores in writing for 4th grade students increased for Hispanic students by six percentage points from 1997 to 2001. Anglo students' scores decreased by five percentage points, and economically disadvantaged students' scores improved by five percentage points.

Exhibit 4.3.4, Exhibit 4.3.5, and Exhibit 4.3.6 display the 8th grade TAAS results for the reading, mathematics, and writing sub-tests for the district as well as for the sub-groups tested from 1997 through the 2001 administration.

Exhibit 4.3.4 TAAS Reading Scores for Grade 8 Disaggregated by Student Groups Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1997-2001				
Year	District	Hispanics	Anglos	Economically Disadvantaged
1997	70.5	64.0	90.5	61.0
1998	71.4	65.0	91.8	58.8
1999	81.6	78.2	94.5	74.1
2000	81.8	78.7	92.3	75.1
2001	85.0	82.0	95.0	79.0
<i>Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card</i>				

Exhibit 4.3.5 TAAS Mathematics Scores for Grade 8 Disaggregated by Student Groups Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1997-2001				
Year	District	Hispanics	Anglos	Economically Disadvantaged
1997	58.3	51.1	80.8	48.3
1998	74.7	69.7	90.4	66.0
1999	81.4	78.6	92.1	73.1
2000	86.2	83.5	95.8	81.6
2001	88.0	85.0	100.0	92.0
<i>Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card</i>				

Exhibit 4.3.6 TAAS Writing Scores for Grade 8 Disaggregated by Student Groups Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1997-2001				
Year	District	Hispanics	Anglos	Economically Disadvantaged
1997	68.8	64.6	82.4	61.7
1998	72.0	66.5	88.9	63.2
1999	74.0	70.5	87.3	64.3
2000	73.5	69.2	88.7	65.7
2001	82.0	79.0	92.0	77.0
<i>Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card</i>				

As can be noted from the exhibits above:

- District scores for 8th grade students for all three sub-tests have increased substantially over the five-year period from 1997 to 2001. Reading scores increased by 15 percentage points; math scores increased by 30 percentage points; and writing scores increased by 14 percentage points.
- Hispanic students' scores have improved in reading by 18 points over the five-year period; scores for Anglo students have increased by five points; and economically disadvantaged students' scores have increased by 18 percentage points.
- Scores in mathematics have increased for Hispanic students from 1997 to 2001 by 34 percentage points, increased for Anglo students by 20 percentage points, and dramatically increased by 44 percentage points for economically disadvantaged students over the same time frame.
- Scores in writing for 8th grade students increased for Hispanic students by 15 percentage points from 1997 to 2001. Anglo students' scores increased by 10 percentage points, and economically disadvantaged students' scores improved by 16 percentage points.

Exhibits 4.3.7 and 4.3.8 display 8th grade results for the science and social studies sub-tests for administration years 1997-2001.

Exhibit 4.3.7
Grade 8 TAAS Science Scores
Disaggregated by Student Groups
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District
1997-2001

Year	District	Hispanics	Anglos	Economically Disadvantaged
1997	70.8	62.7	95.9	62.2
1998	73.7	69.4	87.3	63.6
1999	81.8	78.6	93.8	77.2
2000	84.0	80.2	97.2	77.3
2001	89.0	87.0	97.0	85.0

Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card

Exhibit 4.3.8
Grade 8 TAAS Social Studies Scores
Disaggregated by Student Groups
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District
1997-2001

Year	District	Hispanics	Anglos	Economically Disadvantaged
1997	70.8	62.7	95.9	62.2
1998	73.7	69.4	87.3	63.6
1999	58.2	51.0	84.6	44.1
2000	67.0	58.7	95.8	58.1
2001	63.0	57.0	92.0	51.0

Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card

As can be noted from Exhibits 4.3.7 and 4.3.8:

- District scores in science have increased over the period from 1997 to 2001 from 70 percent passing to 89 percent passing. However, scores in social studies have decreased over the same time period from 70 percent passing to 63 percent passing.
- The scores for each student group on the science test increased. Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students' scores increased more substantially than did the scores of the Anglo 8th graders. However, Anglo students' scores were already in the 90 percent range and have remained there.
- Scores for all student groups on the social studies test have decreased. Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students' scores have ranged in the 50 and 60 percentage point passing range, while the Anglo students' scores have been in the 80 to 90 percent passing range.

Exhibit 4.3.9, Exhibit 4.3.10, and Exhibit 4.3.11 display the 10th grade (Exit) TAAS results for the reading, mathematics, and writing sub-tests for the district as well as for the sub-groups tested from 1997 through the 2001 administration.

Exhibit 4.3.9
TAAS Reading Scores for Grade 10 (Exit)
Disaggregated by Student Groups
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District
1997-2001

Year	District	Hispanics	Anglos	Economically Disadvantaged
1997	77.3	69.7	94.0	66.4
1998	86.9	81.9	95.8	80.0
1999	82.9	77.5	98.6	74.8
2000	86.5	83.3	95.5	81.2
2001	83.0	80.0	90.0	77.0

Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card

Exhibit 4.3.10
TAAS Mathematics Scores for Grade 10 (Exit)
Disaggregated by Student Groups
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District
1997-2001

Year	District	Hispanics	Anglos	Economically Disadvantaged
1997	58.5	48.6	79.1	46.4
1998	72.5	59.9	92.7	58.3
1999	69.0	60.1	95.7	57.5
2000	84.0	80.7	94.6	78.8
2001	81.0	78.0	89.0	76.0

Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card

Exhibit 4.3.11
TAAS Writing Scores for Grade 10 (Exit)
Disaggregated by Student Groups
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District
1997-2001

Year	District	Hispanics	Anglos	Economically Disadvantaged
1997	87.2	83.4	95.2	80.1
1998	90.8	85.1	98.9	85.4
1999	88.1	84.9	98.6	81.9
2000	90.1	88.3	95.9	86.4
2001	84.0	83.0	90.0	80.0

Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card

As can be noted from the exhibits above:

- District scores for 10th grade students for two sub-tests have increased over the five-year period from 1997 to 2001. Reading scores increased by six percentage points; math scores increased by 23 percentage points; however, writing scores decreased by three percentage points.
- Hispanic students' scores have improved in reading by 11 points over the five-year period; scores for Anglo students have decreased by four points; and, economically disadvantaged students' scores have increased by 11 percentage points.
- Scores in mathematics have dramatically increased for Hispanic students from 1997 to 2001 by 30 percentage points; scores have increased for Anglo students by 10 percentage points, and substantially increased by 30 percentage points for economically disadvantaged students over the same time frame.

- Scores in writing for 8th grade students increased for Hispanic students by 15 percentage points from 1997 to 2001. Anglo students' scores increased by 10 percentage points, and economically disadvantaged students' scores improved by 16 percentage points.

Exhibit 4.3.12, Exhibit 4.3.13, Exhibit 4.3.14, and Exhibit 4.3.15 depict the passing results for administration years 1999 through 2001 for the End-of-Course exams administered at the end of the corresponding courses taken primarily at the high school level. Most students take these courses in the 9th or 10th grade; however, the tests could be administered as early as the 8th grade and as late as the 12th grade depending on when individual students enroll in these courses. Prior to 1999, results were not reported in terms of percentage passing; scores were reported in terms of percentage taking the end-of-course exams. Therefore, 1999 through 2001 district data, which represent the percentage of students passing the exam, were analyzed. In addition, state and Region 20 scores were included for the 1999 and 2000 test administrations. Neither state nor Region 20 scores were available at the time that this audit was published. An asterisk (*) in the 2001 cells for the state and Region 20 acknowledges the lack of scores for these two groups.

Exhibit 4.3.12 Percentage of Students Passing the Algebra I End-of-Course Exam State, Region 20, District, and Disaggregated by Student Group Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1999-2001						
Year	State	Region 20	District	Hispanic	Anglo	Econ. Disadv.
1999	43.4	43.9	47.4	41.2	70.0	39.3
2000	43.9	43.4	47.0	40.9	67.4	37.8
2001	*	*	52.0	46.0	77.0	43.0
Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card						

Exhibit 4.3.13 Percentage of Students Passing the Biology I End-of-Course Exam State, Region 20, District, and Disaggregated by Student Group Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1999-2001						
Year	State	Region 20	District	Hispanic	Anglo	Econ. Disadv.
1999	76.4	73.8	67.9	59.4	86.7	58.6
2000	80.3	77.7	66.8	61.7	94.4	52.9
2001	*	*	69.0	62.0	92.0	62.0
Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card						

Exhibit 4.3.14 Percentage of Students Passing the English II End-of-Course Exam State, Region 20, District, and Disaggregated by Student Group Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1999-2001						
Year	State	Region 20	District	Hispanic	Anglo	Econ. Disadv.
1999	72.7	72.2	69.8	61.2	87.7	55.4
2000	77.7	77.8	75.7	71.9	91.3	69.9
2001	*	*	76.0	74.0	84.0	69.0
Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card						

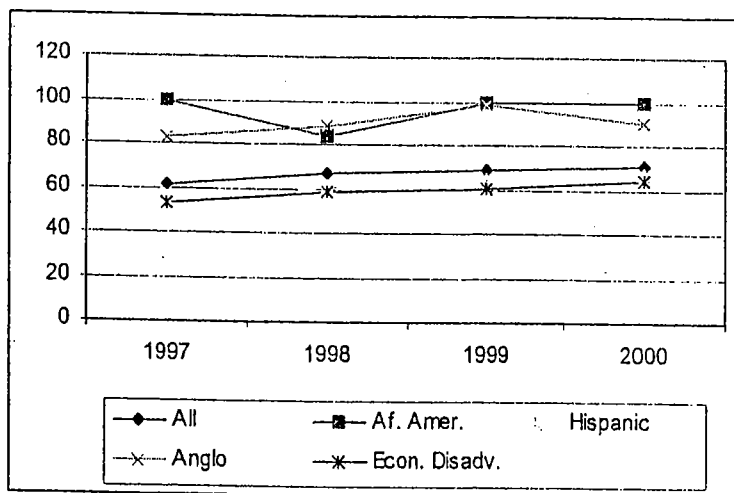
Exhibit 4.3.15 Percentage of Students Passing U.S. History End-of-Course Exam State, Region 20, District, and Disaggregated by Student Group Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1999-2001						
Year	State	Region 20	District	Hispanic	Anglo	Econ. Disadv.
1999	69.8	63.8	60.8	46.4	91.7	41.4
2000	72.1	71.5	49.2	41.9	81.3	35.2
2001	*	*	55.0	44.0	88.0	4.0
Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card						

As can be noted from the End-of-Course exhibits above:

- District scores on the End-of-Course exams range from a low of 52 percent passing the Algebra I exam to a high of 76 percent passing on the English II exam for the 2001 administration year.
- District scores have increased slightly over the three-year period depicted for the Algebra I exam, the Biology I exam, and the English II exam. District scores have decreased over the three-year period for the U.S. History exam.
- Algebra I scores for Uvalde students were higher than the average scores in the state and in Region 20 for the 1999 and 2000 administration years.
- Uvalde students' passing percentages for the Biology I, English II, and U.S. History exams were below the state and Region 20 average scores.

Exhibit 4.3.16 allows auditors to analyze the achievement gap among the various sub-groups. The data sets for this exhibit are all sub-tests summed for grades 3 through 8 and grade 10. Data are disaggregated by student groups in addition to students classified as economically disadvantaged based on their eligibility for the federal free/reduced lunch program. It should be noted that this is the data source for which African American scores were in sufficient numbers for them to be depicted.

Exhibit 4.3.16
 Student Scores on TAAS in the Area of All Tests Taken
 Grades 3 through 8 and 10 Summed and Disaggregated for All Sub-Groups
 Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District
 1997-2000



As can be noted:

- Scores for the TAAS test have continued to increase in the district over the period for which scores are reflected.

- African American students total at least 30 in number throughout the district in the grade levels tested, and therefore receive a disaggregated score. African American students in the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District score above the district average score as well as above all other student groups.
- A substantial gap in scores remains between Hispanic and Anglo students' scores (24 percentage points) and between economically disadvantaged and Anglo students' scores (27 percentage points).

Exhibit 4.3.17 presents a cohort analysis of the TAAS scores for All Tests Taken for grades 3 through 8. This exhibit enables auditors to see relative growth of the same group of students over time. This student group is especially important since it will be the first group to take the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test in the 11th grade in 2003. The TAKS is predicted to be a more difficult assessment compared to the TAAS.

Exhibit 4.3.17 Cohort Analysis of the TAAS All Tests Taken Percentage Passing for Grades 3 through 8 Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1994-95 through 1999-2000						
Grade	3	4	5	6	7	8
Year	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
% Passing: All Tests	52.5	58.1	61.1	67.6	49.8	55.8
Reading	68.0	73.7	70.7	76.7	81.6	81.8
Math	57.2	64.6	66.6	74.6	81.4	86.2

As can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.17:

- Approximately 50 percent of the students in this class have continued to fail one or more sections of the TAAS.
- Reading scores for this group of students have increased from 68 percent to 81 percent passing when they were 8th graders.
- This group of students has increased their math skills over time as indicated by an increase in TAAS passing from 57 percent when they were 3rd graders to 86 percent passing as 8th graders.

Exhibits 4.3.18 through 4.3.20 provide a multi-year comparison of the different elementary schools within the district and their corresponding TAAS scores. Scores presented in the tables are the scores for all students at the school summed.

Exhibit 4.3.18 Comparison of TAAS Reading Scores for Elementary Schools Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1996-2000					
School	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Anthon	72.3	73.3	86.3	85.5	78.8
Batesville	66.7	70.0	82.1	72.2	72.9
Benson	76.1	74.8	90.1	89.0	84.1
Flores	66.6	77.2	76.8	76.0	82.4
Robb	74.7	70.5	76.6	85.4	75.8

Worthy of note in Exhibit 4.3.18 are the following:

- Gaps in the reading scores among the elementary schools have ranged from a low in 1997 of approximately seven points to a high in 1999 of 17 points.
- With the exception of 1997, Benson Elementary has had the highest reading scores among all elementary schools in the district.

- Batesville Elementary has registered the lowest reading scores for three of the five years (1997, 1999, and 2000).

Exhibit 4.3.19 Comparison of TAAS Mathematics Scores for Elementary Schools Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1996-2000					
School	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Anthon	56.4	76.4	83.8	85.4	71.9
Batesville	60.6	72.5	66.7	73.7	68.8
Benson	70.9	75.8	80.0	80.8	83.6
Flores	63.1	69.7	71.2	74.5	89.7
Robb	73.0	71.6	72.6	83.3	76.8

Noted in Exhibit 4.3.19 are the following:

- Gaps in the mathematics scores among the elementary schools have ranged from a low in 1997 of approximately seven points to a high in 2000 of 21 points.
- Anthon Elementary posted the highest mathematics scores for three of the five years (1997-1999). In 1996, Robb Elementary scored the highest in mathematics, while Flores posted the highest score in mathematics in 2000.
- Batesville Elementary registered the lowest scores among the elementary schools in 1998 through 2000.

Exhibit 4.3.20 Comparison of TAAS Writing Scores for Elementary Schools Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1996-2000					
School	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Anthon	60.4	78.5	92.7	86.5	80.3
Batesville	91.7	87.0	94.1	72.7	84.6
Benson	67.2	84.8	89.7	85.5	85.9
Robb	85.3	84.9	79.5	91.8	88.2

As can be noted in the exhibit above:

- Gaps in writing scores among the elementary schools containing 4th grade have ranged from a low in 2000 of eight points to a high of 31 points in 1996.
- Batesville Elementary posted the highest writing scores in 1996 through 1998 at which time Robb Elementary registered the highest scores for 1999 and 2000.
- Anthon Elementary posted the lowest scores in 1996, 1997, and 2000.

Exhibit 4.3.21, Exhibit 4.3.22, and Exhibit 4.3.23 compare TAAS scores of the two schools serving Uvalde 7th and 8th graders.

Exhibit 4.3.21 Comparative TAAS Reading Scores for Middle/Junior High Schools Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1996-2000					
School	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Uvalde JH	68.0	71.9	74.7	80.0	76.4
Batesville MS	60.7	73.3	61.5	63.8	63.8

As can be noted in the exhibit above:

- The gap between the scores posted by the two schools serving 7th and 8th graders has ranged from two points in 1997 to a high of 17 points in 1999. Scores in 1998 and 2000 also indicate a double-digit difference between the two schools.

- Batesville Middle School registered lower scores all years except for 1997 when the students at Uvalde Junior High posted the lower scores.

Exhibit 4.3.22 Comparative TAAS Mathematics Scores for Middle/Junior High Schools Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1996-2000					
School	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Uvalde JH	58.2	63.1	76.1	81.9	83.0
Batesville MS	66.3	68.0	65.4	65.4	78.9

As can be noted in Exhibit 4.3.22:

- The gap between the mathematics scores recorded by the two schools ranged from a low of five points in 1997 and 2000 to a high of 16 points in 1999.
- Uvalde Junior High School's scores were lower than Batesville's scores in 1996 and 1997. However, since 1998, Batesville's scores have been lower than Uvalde Junior High School's scores.

Exhibit 4.3.23 Comparative TAAS Writing Scores for Middle/Junior High Schools Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1996-2000					
School	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Uvalde JH	68.3	67.3	71.5	74.4	73.0
Batesville MS	76.0	85.2	77.8	70.4	79.3

As can be noted above:

- The gap between the writing scores recorded by the two schools ranged from a low of four points in 1999 to a high of 18 points in 1997.
- Except for 1999, Uvalde Junior High scores have been lower in writing than the scores at Batesville Middle School.

Exhibit 4.3.24 depicts Uvalde students' scores on the ACT in comparison to students within the state and for students within Region 20. District scores are also disaggregated by student group.

Exhibit 4.3.24 Percentage of Students Scoring At or Above Criteria on the ACT For the State, Region 20, and the District and Disaggregated by Student Group for the District Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1996-1999					
Year	State	Region 20	District	Hispanics	Anglos
1996	26.3	21.5	23.6	7.5	38.3
1997	26.2	22.7	21.7	11.0	32.3
1998	27.2	22.2	17.9	10.0	26.0
1999	27.2	21.6	15.4	5.6	27.4

Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card

As can be noted from Exhibit 4.3.24:

- With the exception of the 1996 administration when Region 20 schools' scores were less than the scores in Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District, Uvalde students have scored lower on the ACT than the average of the state and the schools in Region 20.
- While state scores have increased slightly, Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District scores have decreased from 23.6 in 1996 to 15.4 in 1999.
- Scores of both student groups within Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District (Hispanic and Anglo) have decreased over the four administration years reported.

- A significant gap in scores between Hispanic and Anglo students exists. In 1999, the gap was approximately 22 points.

Exhibit 4.3.25 displays the Uvalde students' scores on the SAT in comparison to students within the state and students within Region 20. District scores are also disaggregated by student group.

Exhibit 4.3.25 Mean Scores of Students in the State, Region 20, and the District and Disaggregated by Student Group on the SAT Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1996-1999					
Year	State	Region 20	District	Hispanic	Anglo
1996	993	951	961	896	1025
1997	992	954	962	892	1056
1998	992	952	943	885	1008
1999	989	941	933	886	1001
Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System District Report Card					

As can be noted in Exhibit 4.3.25:

- District scores on the SAT were consistently below the state average. However, in 1996 and 1997, Uvalde students' scores were above the average within Region 20.
- District scores have decreased over time from 961 in 1996 to 933 in 1999.
- Scores for student populations (Hispanic and Anglo) within the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District have decreased over the timeframe reported.
- A significant gap has remained between the scores of Hispanic and the scores of Anglo students in the district. In 1999, the gap was in excess of 100 points.

In summary, TAAS scores within the district are gradually rising (see Exhibit 4.3.16). However, the gap between the scores of Hispanic and Anglo students remains. Additionally, trend data from college entrance testing indicate a downward slope for students in the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District when ACT and SAT scores are analyzed.

STANDARD 5: A School System Has Improved Productivity.

Productivity refers to the relationship between system input and output. A school system meeting this standard of the TASA-TCMAC Curriculum Management Audit is able to demonstrate consistently improved pupil outcomes, even in the face of diminishing resources. Improved productivity results when a school system is able to create a consistent level of congruence between major variables in achieving enhanced results and in controlling costs.

What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District

While the attainment of improved productivity in a school system is a complex process, caused in part by the lack of a tight organizational structure (referred to as "loosely coupled"), common indicators of a school system meeting this audit standard are:

- Planned and actual congruence among curricular objectives, results, and financial allocations;
- A financial data base and network that can track costs to results, provide sufficient fiduciary control, and can be used as a viable data base in making policy and operational decisions;
- Specific means that have been selected or modified and implemented to attain better results in the schools over a specified time period;
- A planned series of interventions that have raised pupil performance levels over time and maintained those levels within the same cost parameters as in the past;
- School facilities that are well-kept, sufficient, safe, orderly, and conducive to effective delivery of the instructional program; and
- Support systems that function in systemic ways.

Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard Five. The details follow within separate findings.

The auditors found the financial condition of the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District to be unstable. The district has had a budgeted operating deficit in an amount greater than the balance in the General Fund for each of the past two years. The board has failed to comply with its policies regarding the scope of the budget, and cash flow problems were a possibility. For the past three years, the undesignated fund balance has been more than two million dollars below the amount recommended by the district's accounting firm.

Policies are inadequate to support curriculum-driven budgeting, and few documented linkages exist between curriculum decisions and budget allocations. The budget has been constructed primarily by making incremental adjustments to the previous year's allocation. Central office budget guidelines require linkages between instructional goals and budget allocations. However, there is a lack of compliance because the processes and databases necessary to support this effort did not exist. Instructional program interventions do not meet audit criteria for effective implementation for the same reason -- lack of methodology and data. Overall, the district lacked an adequate design for curriculum-driven budgeting and processes to effectively comply with existing guidelines.

Auditors found that most school sites required more careful attention to the issues of cleanliness, safety, storage, and maintenance. Further, there is no preventive maintenance plan to help preserve the current facilities as well as those projected for construction.

Finding 5.1: Financial Practices Reviewed by the District's Certified Public Accountants Reveal Budgeting Practices that Compromise the District's Financial Condition.

Adequate revenues and sound budgeting and spending practices are essential for effective curriculum management. To determine the financial condition of the district, auditors reviewed management letters and annual financial reports prepared by the district's accounting firm, Ede & Company, Certified Public Accountants. Auditors also examined board policies, budgets, and related documents and interviewed board members, administrators, teachers, and other members of the community.

In the most recent financial report, Ede & Company auditors noted that while their tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance reportable under *Government Auditing Standards*, they did identify a board-approved budgeted operating deficit in an amount greater than the balance in the General Fund. This resulted in an anticipated negative fund balance of \$775,639.51. The deficit was reported to the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District board of trustees in a letter dated November 10, 2000. The accountants recommended that the board ensure that the fund balance exceed any operating deficits.

The Director of Financial Accounting Standards, Texas Educational Agency (TEA), accepted the financial report cited above, but noted the following concerns in a letter to the board of trustees on April 6, 2001:

- Notes to the Financial Statement (page 25) did not disclose the interest rate for loans listed therein. Further, TEA calculations indicated that the interest rate was "apparently" below the legal limit.
- Notes to the Financial Statement (page 27) erroneously omitted the aggregate stop loss coverage for the district's self-funded health insurance plan.
- The Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (Exhibit D) should have identified the Notice of Grant project numbers for federal grants, not the fiscal year/county-district numbers.

The following board policies were most applicable to this review of the district's financial condition:

- *Board Policy CE (Legal) Annual Operating Budget* contains the following provisions: (1) "The superintendent shall prepare... proposed budget covering all estimated and proposed expenditures of the district for the following year," and (2) "The board shall adopt a budget to cover all expenditures."
- *Board Policy BBD (Exhibit) Board Members: Training and Orientation* requires the board to adopt "a budget that incorporates sound business and fiscal practices and provides resources to achieve the district's vision, mission, and goals."

Overall, district budgeting practices compromise the district's long-term stability.

Data from the most recent financial reports are summarized in Exhibit 5.1.1 through Exhibit 5.1.5. Balances have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

Exhibit 5.1.1 Comparison of General Fund Revenue, Expenditures, and Fund Balances Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District 1998-2000			
Revenue Sources	FY 1998 ✓	FY 1999	FY 2000
Local and Intermediate	\$5,235,308	\$5,833,326	\$6,680,997
State	20,397,712	20,741,268	21,462,884
Federal	408	80,476	129,973
Total Revenue	25,633,429	26,655,071	28,273,855
Total Expenditures	27,245,638	26,437,223	28,002,328
Actual Fund Balance	172,118	186,668	407,351
Budgeted Fund Balance	1,333,021	(1,399,114)	-(775,640) ✓
Undesignated Fund Balance	\$(2,125,327)	\$(2,250,332)	\$(2,235,728)
Source: Annual Financial Reports for 1998-2000, Ede & Company, Certified Public Accountants			

A comparison of general fund data for the fiscal years ending in August 1998 through August 2000 indicates the following:

- The total revenue increased 10.3 percent from \$25,633,429 to \$28,273,855.
- Total expenditures increased 2.8 percent from \$27,245,638 to \$28,002,328.
- The budgeted fund balance declined 158.2 percent, from \$1,333,021 (FY 1998) to a minus \$775,640 (FY 2000).
- Negative fund balances were budgeted for FY 1999 and FY 2000, \$1,399,114 and \$775,640, respectively. The budgeted negative fund balances indicate that the staff had *planned* to spend more money than was projected in receipts. This is a violation of the district's own policy, *CE (Legal)*, which requires the budget to cover "estimated and proposed expenditures...."
- For each of the past three fiscal years, the undesignated fund balance was more than two million dollars below the amount recommended by the district's accounting firm. Ede & Company noted the FY 2000 deficit in a letter to the superintendent and recommended that steps be taken "to ensure that its [undesignated] fund balance is greater than any budgeted operating deficits." The district responded in October 2001 by adopting *Board Policy, Fund Balance DEC (Local)*, requiring a fund balance equal to 2.5 months of the operating budget.

During interviews, auditors were told that: (1) the budgeted negative fund balances were due, in part, to the failure of the staff to reduce expenditures to accommodate a declining student population, and (2) that some board members were not knowledgeable participants in the budget process:

- "Basically we've been operating on a deficit basis, borrowing from the fund balance. We're losing students, and we're not making adjustments in personnel."
- "The district is in poor financial health. They got into a bind in [1996], and it wasn't addressed; so we're having to deal with that now."
- "Maybe [board members] should have been more aware of the financial issues in the district."
- "Several board members had some training on understanding the budget, but we could use a better understanding of what's in the budget."

Staffing at the high school was one manifestation of the failure to adjust personnel staffing to student census. Six administrators (a principal and five assistants) serve approximately 1,200 students, for an administrator-to-student ratio of 1:200.

Other aspects of the district's financial condition are summarized in the exhibits that follow.

Exhibit 5.1.2 shows the general fixed assets account for the district.

Exhibit 5.1.2				
General Fixed Assets as of August 31, 2000				
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District				
Description	Balance 9/1/1999	Additions	Deletions	Balance 8/31/2000
Land	\$1,873,340	\$221,532	-	\$2,094,872
Building/Improvements	\$19,662,420	\$10,307,937	-	\$29,970,357
Furniture & Equipment	\$11,130,497	\$218,584	\$89,553	\$11,259,528
Capital Lease	\$134,730	-	-	\$134,730
Totals	\$32,800,987	\$10,748,053	\$89,553	\$43,459,487
<i>Source: Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended August 31, 2000, Ede & Co., Cert. Public Accountants</i>				

Exhibit 5.1.3 indicates the debt service requirements for loans payable in future fiscal years.

Exhibit 5.1.3			
Anticipated Debt Service Requirements (Loans Payable) in 2001 and Subsequent Years			
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District			
General Obligations			
Year Ending August 31	Principal	Interest	Total Requirements
2001	\$265,000	\$14,333	\$279,333
2002	\$100,000	\$ 5,200	\$105,200
2003	-	-	-
2004	-	-	-
Subsequent Years	-	-	-
Totals	\$365,000	\$19,533	\$384,533
<i>Source: Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended August 31, 2000, Ede & Co., Cert. Public Accountants</i>			

Exhibit 5.1.4 indicates the debt service requirements in future fiscal years as a result of the district's building program.

Exhibit 5.1.4			
Anticipated Debt Service Requirements (Bonds Payable) in 2001 and Subsequent Years			
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District			
General Obligations			
Year Ending August 31	Principal	Interest	Total Requirements
2001	\$ 600,000	\$ 1,253,460	\$ 1,853,460
2002	\$ 635,000	\$ 1,217,460	\$ 1,852,460
2003	\$ 675,000	\$ 1,179,360	\$ 1,854,360
2004	\$ 715,000	\$ 1,138,860	\$ 1,853,860
2005	\$ 760,000	\$ 1,095,960	\$ 1,855,960
Subsequent Years	\$21,205,000	\$10,292,698	\$31,497,698
Totals	\$24,590,000	\$16,117,798	\$40,767,798
<i>Source: Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended August 31, 2000, Ede & Co., Cert. Public Accountants</i>			

Changes in the district's general long-term debt are shown in Exhibit 5.1.5.

Exhibit 5.1.5				
Changes in the General Long-term Debt (Bonds Payable)				
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District				
Description	Balance Outstanding 09/1/99	Additions (Issued Current Year)	Deletions (Retired Current Year)	Balance Outstanding 08/31/00
Building Series 90	\$ 925,000	-	\$ 925,000	-
Building Series 98	\$25,000,000	-	\$ 410,000	\$24,590,000
Totals	\$25,925,000	-	\$1,335,000	\$24,590,000
<i>Source: Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended August 31, 2000, Ede & Co., Cert. Public Accountants</i>				

In summary, the district has had no recent reportable lapses in accounting or budgetary controls. However, the board and staff have failed to comply with the policy requiring that the budget cover all expenditures. Further, for the past three years, the district has had an undesignated fund balance deficit in excess of two million dollars, creating the potential for future cash flow and program delivery problems. Both conditions indicate a lack of compliance with board policy requiring sound fiscal practices.

Finding 5.2: The Design for a Curriculum-driven Budgeting Processes Is Inadequate; Compliance with Existing Budget Policies and Procedures Is Ineffective.

A school district's productivity is improved when clear linkages exist between the curriculum and the budget. Such linkages provide for a budgetary process that is driven by curriculum needs, goals, and priorities. Linkages between the budget and curriculum are critical and document how and why the district allocates fiscal resources to support and implement its programs. Thus, the budget is the financial expression of the curriculum and should mirror program expectations. When the budgeting process is not guided by curriculum goals and priorities, educational programs are less likely to get the resources necessary to achieve their objectives.

To determine the nature of the district's budgeting process, auditors reviewed recent budgets, business office procedures, plans, and related documents. The audit team also conducted interviews with board members, administrators, teachers, other employees, and community members.

Overall, policies were inadequate to support curriculum-driven budgeting. The budget was constructed primarily by making incremental adjustments to the previous year's allocation. Budget guidelines from the central office expressly requires linkages between instructional goals and budget allocations. Site-based decision-making teams were active in developing instructional goals, programs, and budgets. However, compliance with the guidelines was problematic because of: (1) a lack of specific methodology, and (2) a database that was inadequate to justify many programs or to support rational choices among programs. Overall, the district lacked an adequate design for curriculum-driven budgeting.

The concept of curriculum-driven budgeting was alluded to in *Board Policy BBD (Exhibit) Board Members: Training and Orientation*. It states the expectation that the board will adopt "a budget that...provides resources to achieve the district's vision, mission, and goals."

This expectation was reinforced in the district's *Budget Planning Guidelines* for FY 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. These documents expressed the desire "to assure that resources are committed to meet the goals of the district and the objectives of each campus and program of the district." Other pertinent provisions of these guidelines included the following:

- "Planning for campus improvement is an integral part of the budgeting process. The campus (sic) planning for instructional improvement includes in its process the requirement to allocate resources to meet the academic needs of students on the campus as identified by the [site-based decision-making] team."
- "[The work of the school] Budget Team...represents an extension of the planning process in which financial resources are targeted toward campus goals, objectives, and needs. Priorities for resource allocation and for non-allocated budget requests are established among those goals, objectives, and needs."
- "[School budgets] should be consistent with campus improvement plans, instructional goals and objectives, and [target] areas of student needs identified in the planning process."
- "The District Budget Team will...establish funding priorities for non-allocated budget requests that reflect the goals, objectives, and targeted needs of the district."

Although budget guidelines clearly requires strong links between instructional planning and resource allocations, the application of this guidelines did not result in a curriculum-driven budgeting process.